

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-03

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /004 R

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DRAFTED BY AF/E GDKULICK

APPROVED BY AF/E WBCOOTE

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R 212344Z MAY 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

UNCLAS STATE 116290

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 116290 JIDDA AMMAN

BEIRUT CAIRO DAMASCUS GENEVA KUWAIT DHAHRAN JERUSALEM

KHARTOUM MANAMA TUNIS TEL AVIV TEHRAN TRIPOLI RABAT LONDON

PARIS MOSCOW ROME USUN NATO SANAA BAGHDAD DOHA ABU DHABI

ALGIERS DUBLIN CINCEUR MAY 19

QUOTE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

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TAGS: PFOR, SA, US

SUBJECT: REMARKS BY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

REF: JIDDA 3529 (NOTAL)

1. SAG FOREIGN MINISTRY MAY BE REFERRING TO TWO INTERVIEWS,
ONE ON TV AND OTHER WITH US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT. FOLLOW-
ING IS EXTRACT OF SECRETARY SCHLESINGER'S REMARKS ON ISSUES
AND ANSWERS PROGRAM OF MAY 18:

QTE: MR. CLARK: MR. SECRETARY, WHILE WE ARE SENDING OUT

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SIGNALS TO THE REST OF THE WORLD THESE DAYS HOW TOUGH

WE ARE GOING TO STAND AND OUR CREDIBILITY STILL EXISTS, WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IN THE EVENT OF A NEW OUTBREAK IN THE MIDDLE EAST THAT HAS IMPOSED AN OIL EMBARGO ON THE UNITED STATES; WOULD WE PEACEFULLY GO ALONG WITH THE EMBARGO AS WE DID LAST TIME?

SECRETARY SCHLESINGER: WELL, AS I HAVE INDICATED BEFORE, WE MIGHT BE LESS TOLERANT OF SUCH AN EMBARGO THAN WE HAVE BEEN. JUST PRECISELY WHAT MEASURES WE MIGHT TAKE WOULD REMAIN FOR THE CIRCUMSTANCES, BUT I DO NOT EXPECT THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES TO ARISE.

MR. CLARK: BUT IN YOUR VIEW MILITARY ACTION AGAINST THE ARAB WORLD COULD STILL BE A VIABLE OPTION IF THERE WERE AN OIL EMBARGO?

SECRETARY SCHLESINGER: I THINK THAT IT COULD BE ACHIEVED BUT WE REGARD THAT AS A VERY IMPROBABLE EVENT IN THE FIRST PLACE AND IT CERTAINLY IS NOT AN OPTION THAT IS ATTRACTIVE ON ITS FACE, SAVE IN DESPERATE CIRCUMSTANCES.

MR. CLARK: ONE MORE VERY QUICK QUESTION: THERE IS CONFUSION IN THIS COUNTRY AS TO WHAT PRECISELY OUR COMMITMENT IS TO ISRAEL.

SECRETARY SCHLESINGER: I THINK THERE IS NO PRECISE COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL. WE HAVE BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT ITS SURVIVAL FOR MANY YEARS. THE UNITED STATES PLAYED A SUBSTANTIAL ROLE IN ITS ESTABLISHMENT AND WE CONTINUE TO BE INTERESTED IN ITS WELL-BEING. UNQTE.

2. MAY 26 US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT ISSUE ALSO HAS INTERVIEW WITH SECRETARY SCHLESINGER, PERTINENT EXTRACTS OF WHICH ARE AS FOLLOWS:

QTE: Q. IN VIEW OF CONGRESSIONAL CAUTION AFTER VIETNAM, WHAT ARE THE PROSPECTS OF CONTINUED HELP FOR ISRAEL?

A. THE HISTORICAL ATTITUDES OF CONGRESS TOWARD REQUESTS FOR VIETNAM AND ISRAEL ARE AS DIFFERENT AS NIGHT AND DAY.
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CONGRESS HAS SHOWN SIGNS OF APPROVING ANY REQUESTS MADE BY THE ADMINISTRATION - AND, IN FACT, SOME PROPENSITY TO AUGMENT REQUESTS OF SOME ADMINISTRATIONS - FOR AID TO ISRAEL.

Q. IF ANOTHER MIDEAST WAR BREAKS OUT, IS THERE ANYTHING THE US COULD DO ABOUT ANOTHER ARAB OIL EMBARGO?

A. THE UNITED STATES COULD, OF COURSE, TAKE ACTION IN RESPONSE TO A HYPOTHETICAL EMBARGO. AND I THINK THAT WE ARE LESS LIKELY TO BE TOLERANT OF A RENEWED EMBARGO THAN WE WERE OF THE INITIAL ONE IN 1973.

Q. WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "LESS TOLERANT?"

A. THAT IMPLIES THAT WE MIGHT NOT REMAIN ENTIRELY PASSIVE TO THE IMPOSITION OF SUCH AN EMBARGO. I'M NOT GOING TO INDICATE ANY PROSPECTIVE REACTION OTHER THAN TO POINT OUT THERE ARE ECONOMIC, POLITICAL OR CONCEIVABLY MILITARY MEASURES IN RESPONSE.

Q. WITH REOPENING OF THE SUEZ CANAL, DO YOU EXPECT A MAJOR SOVIET NAVAL BUILD-UP IN THE INDIAN OCEAN?

A. I WOULD EXPECT THAT THE SOVIET PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN WILL EXPAND. REOPENING OF THE CANAL REDUCES THEIR LINES OF COMMUNICATION BY SOMETHING LIKE 6,500 MILES, AND THAT WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE SOME EFFECT.

THE SOVIETS ARE BUILDING A MAJOR FACILITY AT BERBERA ON THE GULF OF ADEN - SO EXPENSIVE A FACILITY THAT IT'S OBVIOUSLY NOT INTENDED PURELY FOR SHOW PURPOSES OR DESIGNED TO PROVIDE A DEMONSTRATION PROJECT FOR THE SOMALIS.

Q. WHAT SORT OF INSTALLATION IS IT?

A. IT CONSISTS OF PORT FACILITIES, AN EXPANDED AIRSTRIP. THEY ARE CONSTRUCTING BARRACKS. THEY ARE BUILDING A REWORK FACILITY FOR EITHER AIR-TO-SURFACE MISSILES OR SURFACE-TO-SURFACE MISSILES. THAT KIND OF EXPANSION SUGGESTS THAT THEY ARE MORE THAN MILDLY INTERESTED IN UNCLASSIFIED

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THEIR MILITARY POWER ASTRIDE THE LIFELINE OF THE INDUSTRIALIZED WORLD TO THE PERSIAN GULF. I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANY OTHER READING.

Q. HOW WILL THE UNITED STATES RESPOND?

A. WE WILL HAVE TO MAINTAIN A MILITARY BALANCE AND BE PREPARED TO OFFSET ANY EXPANSION OF SOVIET MILITARY OR NAVAL CAPACITY IN THE PERSIAN GULF AREA.

WE STILL HAVE OUR REQUEST FOR EXPANSION OF OUR COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY AT DIEGO GARCIA. WE WOULD PLAN TO ENLARGE THAT FACILITY, INCREASE THE SIZE OF THE AIRSTRIP, PROVIDE BERTHING FACILITIES TO THE EXTENT NECESSARY.

Q. THEN THE US IS STILL DETERMINED TO KEEP A STRONG
FORCE IN THE MIDEAST -

A. I THINK THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS GOT TO HOLD THE
RING IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THERE'S JUST NOBODY ELSE WHO
CAN STAND UP TO THE SOVIET UNION. SOME AMERICANS WANT
TO GO OFF IN A SULK FOR FIVE YEARS. BUT IF WE DO, WE'LL
WAKE UP SOME BRIGHT DAY AND DISCOVER THAT THE SOVIETS
HAVE ACHIEVED PARAMOUNT POWER IN THE EASTERN HEMISPHERE.
WE JUST ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO INDULGE IN THAT LUXURY.
END QTE.

3. FYI: SECRETARY SCHLESINGER'S RECENT REMARKS ARE
SIMILAR TO THOSE HE MADE ON PUBLIC TV ON MARCH 31 AND IN
PRESS CONFERENCE OF APRIL 2. END FYI. INGERSOLL UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PFOR
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE116290
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: E GDKULICK
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: SECSTATE WASHDC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750528/aaaaayyp.tel
Line Count: 184
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags: ANOMALY
Review Date: 30 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 JUL 2003 by BalzMJ>; APPROVED <27 JAN 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REMARKS BY
TAGS: SA, US
To: ADDIS ABABA MOGADISHU NAIROBI
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006